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force of the missionary idea that it has been styled the "Idealism of Christianity." Such a statement of the missionary idea, as may be found in the Roman Catholic *Ecclesiastical Review*, is well worthy of our attention.

### **Foreign Missions and Methodist Union**

Under the title "Foreign Mission Problems and Methodist Union" Bishop E. R. Hendrix has written in the *Methodist Review* an exceedingly informing article on the relation that foreign missions have to the present-day movements towards church union. His view is given point because he writes at a time when his own church body is seriously considering the advisability of forming a closer union of the various branches of Methodism in America. He says that such a movement is in direct accord with the direction in which the foreign-mission movement is headed. Indeed, he is inclined to think that much of the enthusiasm for church union that is abroad in America today is a kind of reflex from the foreign-mission field. Such efforts as the consolidation of the missionary work of the Presbyterian church in China, for instance, have meant a great deal to the formative thought of religious leaders at home. It is becoming more and more clear that the 164 denominations in America and the 183 denominations in Great Britain represent a divided church as well as a condition which needs considerable adjustment. Protestant foreign missions alone represent 377 boards, 24,092 missionaries,

and expend annually over thirty million dollars, without working together in love, or learning highly to esteem each other in love for their works' sake. However, the impact of dense masses of heathenism has helped to overcome to some degree this lamentable state of affairs. It is not surprising, then, that the foreign missionary welcomes heartily the proposed movement toward union in Methodism.

### **Missionary Conference in Cuba**

Following the much-discussed congress at Panama a conference was held at Havana, Cuba. A considerable number of delegates to the Panama congress attended the Cuban conference, so that the official count showed that 120 delegates, from the United States and Cuba, had registered. Although the Roman Catholics count a large proportion of the population of Cuba among their following, it is apparent that Rome has very little influence on the political affairs of the country. But it has been admitted that there is a noticeable indifference to all religion, and this situation presents the missionary with his chief problem. At the conference this lack of desire for religion confronted the delegates as a serious problem. Nevertheless, questions of comity and overlapping were dealt with, and it is anticipated that duplications will be corrected in the future. The most important result of the conference was the appointment of a committee of conference for Cuba, to work with the large central committee provided for at the Panama congress.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **The Advance of Education in the Southern States**

Experts who have been working under the direction of the General Education Board inform us that considerable progress is being made in secondary education in the southern states. The board supports pro-

fessors of secondary education in 11 states and agents for negro education in 7 states. Eight new high schools were started in Florida last year; 11 in Virginia; 4 in Alabama; 8 in West Virginia. New high-school buildings were opened in Kentucky at a cost of \$495,000; in Mississippi at

a cost of \$410,000; in Alabama at a cost of \$303,750; in Arkansas at a cost of \$355,000, and in Tennessee at a cost of \$154,500. It is said that the negro rural schools of the South are showing perceptible improvement, and the industrial teachers provided by the Jeanes fund are adapting the education of the negro to his real needs. In other parts of the country it has been demonstrated that advance in secular education creates a demand for a corresponding improvement in religious education. It is to be expected, therefore, that those who are responsible for religious education in the southern states will take steps to promote the advance of religious education.

#### **A Plea for the Catechetical Method**

Dr. De Vries, writing on religious education in the *Living Church*, April 15, makes a plea for the restoration of the catechetical method of teaching. He acknowledges that the method is frowned on by some modern, scientific pedagogues, but he is not persuaded that this is sufficient reason for the abandonment of a practice which has produced such splendid results. The real reason, he says, for the decline of catechetical teaching is the incompetency of the clergy for this aspect of their work and the increasing pressure of their Sunday tasks. Accordingly, he urges that public catechizing may be made effective if the clergy will equip themselves for this aspect of religious teaching, and if, in addition, they will sufficiently prepare themselves for the particular lesson. Our writer tells of the catechetical foundations that were laid in Northern Italy by Charles Barromeo, and of the far-reaching influence they have had since then, and how widely the practice continues to the present. Similarly, in England: into the very life and effectiveness of the church and state of England today have entered public catechizing such as were given sixty or seventy years ago at Christ church, Westminster. If the cate-

chetical method of instruction could be re-established as an aspect of religious education, Dr. De Vries thinks that a great source of help would be found. He expresses the desire that in "our great American cities one or two clergymen of special gifts and attainments would cast aside minor things and address themselves to the task of instruction in the church on Sunday afternoons."

#### **Personal Oversight for Seminary Students**

A writer in the *Living Church*, April 29, expresses his opinion that the average seminary student is in more urgent need of personal oversight than anything else. From the viewpoint of religious education it is of more importance that this need be met than that an adjustment be made in the student's studies or curriculum. This urgent need arises because the student passes through a period of transition which introduces him to grave intellectual and spiritual experiences. Some are troubled with certain difficulties of faith; others feel the wonderfully subtle and appealing claims of Rome, or else swing with the pendulum to the opposite extreme of materialistic rationalism; yet others are vexed with problems of conduct and the inner religious life. In the life of the seminary student the companionship of fellow-students and the instruction of teachers are both highly valued, but they do not meet the need indicated above. The fellow-student either does not know of the inner struggle of his companion, or else is not competent to give the assistance needed. On the other hand, the teacher of the seminary who might be able to give the student the direction he needs is usually unaware of the turmoil that takes place in the student's life. The writer asks that attention be given to the intellectual and spiritual struggles of seminary students, and he advocates a plan whereby intimate and sympathetic oversight of the students be had.